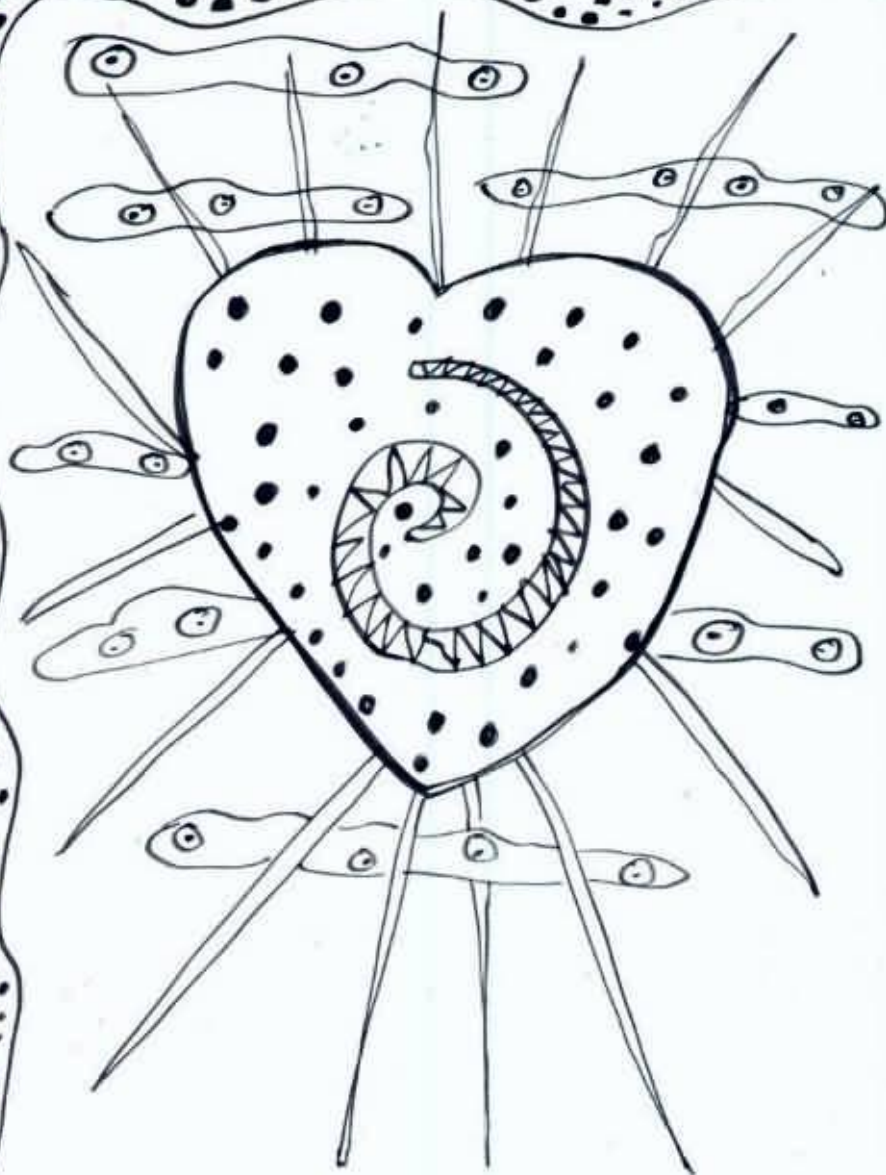


DEATH VALLEY DRIVER



YOU ARE BONES AND BLOOD !

[The cover for DVDVR #122 is by Bay Area artist, Andrea Schneider- who is also the coolest person alive.]

The MALENKOS! and the FANTASTICS! have a CLASSIC! STEAMBOAT! vs. FLAIR! never gets old! DEAN! likes
BAUXITE MEDIUM! a little more than any man should! JUMBO TSURUTA! SWEET BROWN SUGAR! LOW-KI! A ROYAL RUMBLE! It is the SINGLES GOING STEADY! issue.....

WELCOME TO THE DEATH VALLEY DRIVER VIDEO REVIEW #122!

Yes, this baby is all SINGLES GOING STEADY. We've all got random wrestling that needs to be reviewed and the free-form, interchangeable format of the Single That Would Go Steady allows your hard-working, real earnest reviewer to freely skip over hours of videotape that he would otherwise feel the urge to comment on. The walls are down, the reviewers are running free!

!!!!!!!!!!!!!!There's no turning back now- I'm under attack now- I see the skies are open
And I hear the word spoken- SINGLES GOING STEADY You only perceive
what you believe- You need only believe to believe- What do you know?- What do you know?
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%%%%%%%%%

Dean and Joe Malenko vs. The Fantastics- All Japan Classics #97 - 7/15/89- (PHIL RIPPAA): The bizarro part of my brain clicked in and that could only mean trouble. I started looking at this match as a match-up of the traditional wrestling style that had been prevalent up to that point in time versus the flashy, fast paced style that the sport had been moving towards during the 80s. Akin to the Colts vs. Jets in Super Bowl III, Joe and Dean Malenko are the Johnny Unitas/Earl Morrill of the wrestling scene - with their short-cut hair ("A haircut you can set your watch to." - Abe Simpson) and no nonsense style. They were what wrestling was. But now, much like the NFL, the Brothers Malenko were being challenged by an upstart, flamboyant rival yearning for acceptance - the Joe Namathesque Fantastics. With their fancy mullets, Chippendale good looks and New York rush-rush wrestling style, Tommy Rogers and Bobby Fulton stood before Joe and Dean, as the men who would challenge everything the old school brothers knew. While there is a mutual respect between the two teams, the tension lies more in the controversy of whose wrestling style is "right". The Malenkos wanted, no needed, to prove that they could STILL wrestle and that they weren't going to be discarded like some cheap pair of cleats. For the Fantastics, it was a question of proving that they COULD wrestle despite doing things just a little left of center. Because of this motivation, both teams turn out an outstanding match. The Malenkos breakout everything their Daddy taught them, as they work on various points of balances (Joe, a fountain of hurty submissions, does a reverse crossface that makes your own arm throb) and bust out a counter to every hold imaginable (Joe shows off a second variation of How To Escape a Head Scissors that made the one that Dean busted out in a different match mundane by comparison. Dean, however, does an elaborate escape out of a crucifix into a Samoan drop that will have you hitting the rewind button multiple times.) Simple and effective is

the Malenko way and it works. Rogers and Fulton are more than up to the challenge, though, as they match the Malenkos wrestling move for wrestling move. (Tommy Rogers is one of the forgotten great workers of his time. Hell, now he is a billion years old and he can still go.) The Malenkos dictate the early pace and style of the match despite the Fantastics vast attempts to make it THEIR match - quick tags, elaborate double teams (during the course of the match, all the trendy late 80's tag team moves get showcased by Rogers and Fulton - the Rocket Launcher, the Doomsday Device, etc...), wear down your opponents with speed, speed and more speed. Rogers is one of the premiere dropkickers in wrestling and he shows everyone that the cheekbone compressing height method of delivering a dropkick is the way to go. As the match extends past the 15-minute mark, the Fantastics moved the match from 33 to 45 as a frenetic finishing sequence begins. Those fans, worried that Joe and Dean might not have it anymore, will be delighted to see that the Malenkos aren't as stuck in their ways as one might think. Joe actually leaves his feet to throw a dropkick, Dean comes off the top rope and the Brothers get the win using a fancy (for them) double team (a dropkick into a German suplex). The entire match was well received by the audience, who was popping from start to finish. The combatants hug after the match, a sign of acceptance, something along the lines of "there is more than one way to wrestle a great match."

~!~

Jumbo Tsuruta vs. Rusher Kimura - 3/28/76 (UN Title)- Jumbo Legend Vol. 2 Commercial tape-(DEAN RASMUSSEN):

Rusher Kimura styles like an absolute motherfucker in his flowing white robe- looking like 1977 Ken Patera if Patera was absolutely soaked in coolness in his robe and didn't need Eddy the Brain Creechman to get him over. Jumbo looks like the piker chump at belltime as he can only meet the robe challenge with his white silk jacket and gawky look of Steamboat being eternally smoked by the innate coolness of Flair at every Ring Introduction they ever had to share.

Rusher has the mutton chops and bags under his eyes that would make you think he was the veteran in the match even if the old school vertical scar tissue placed neatly and directly under the cool ass widow's peak didn't make it obvious. It's two out of three and they take it to the mat like two TOTAL dicks- forearms across the back of the head and smacks to the face and shitty comments as they work back to a vertical base and it all reminds the viewer that the Seventies were about heat first, then Psychology, then bumps, then matwork, then stiffness, then blood, then any bullshit thrown in to undo the rest. Jumbo spends the first fall powering out of the Greco-Roman knucklelocks- a motif that he used all the way up to his classics with Misawa when Misawa was the young bastard and Jumbo assumed the role of Greatest Rusher Kimura Ever. jumbo does a headlock like they did back in the 70s when it was sold like it was the hold that Ed The Strangler Lewis won 5,000 matches with- as opposed to now where it is forgotten, unutilized or is the most trite resthold other than the chinlock. Jumbo crushes Rusher's neck with fat ass elbows to reapply his headlock- damaging the neck and shoulder until Rusher can power out into a modified Greco-Roman knucklelock-into-a bridging power sequence that still totally rocks in the 2k- so I can imagine how cool it looked back in The Day- when I was a lad of 11. Rusher finally grounds Jumbo and procures the primitive, Pat O'Conner Pressure Hold version of the Cross-Armbreaker and Jumbo sells it with five times the urgency that anyone in

Modern day New Japan would sell it, makes the ropes and they work back from the Knucklelock base. The structure of the first fall is simple and beautiful. It all starts from a neutral position- either a Knucklelock or variation of a knucklelock- and then they explore every cool way the hold can go: into a pinning predicament, into a bridge with Jumbo showing his overwhelming edge in power, into Rusher counteracting Jumbo's power by taking him to the mat with a hold that Jumbo can't power out of, into the the final interpretation- Rusher kicking Jumbo in the stomach (just like Johnny Valentine would) Jumbo kicking back, Rusher chopping Jumbo and Jumbo getting the High VERTICAL BASE on the Old School as Melle Mel Arm Bar. Rusher escapes to the ropes and slaps and shitty things to say are said, tempers flare and the audience is suddenly molten as Jumbo settles the fracas by shooting Rusher into the ropes and kills him with a Flying High Knee. Rusher recovers as Jumbo untangles himself from the ropes and Rusher smacks the sassiness out of young Jumbo so Jumbo smacks Rusher upside the head and they start teeing off on each other until Rusher shoots Jumbo into the ropes and hits him with a Rolling Elbow to crush Jumbo's young punk skull to further set up a very unMurdockian-in-gentleness Brainbuster for the first fall. 13 minutes and 27 seconds of building the story of the match (they hate each other. Jumbo is stronger. Rusher is smarter.) all to set up a high impact pin to allow the rest of the match unfold in a more conventional, logical manner. The second fall starts with Rusher getting Jumbo in a headlock and Jumbo attempting to power out of it. The weird realization of lost psychology like this is that I don't think even modern JAPANESE audiences would have the patience for this- which is a shame because when Jumbo powers out of it by picking up Rusher and hitting a shin-breaker, it draws the crowd deeply into the match and is a PERFECT transition to the story of the second fall- Jumbo mangling Rusher's leg beyond all recognition. He starts with a thousand toehold variations hitting the pinnacle with a cool as fuck Bridging Toehold Front Facelock combo that is the King Of Rock in any era. After having his leg ravaged by Jumbo, Rusher makes the ropes and gets thoroughly pissed when the young punk doesn't give him a clean break and they start smacking the fuck out of each other again. Jumbo ends it by hitting a BEAUTIFUL Standing Dropkick that follows-up with a fabulous Butterfly Suplex that he holds up and takes over slowly -just like Dick Murdock would- and gets the two count. Jumbo crushes his back with a backbreaker and then hits another Butterfly for the second fall. The depth of this match is pretty awe-inspiring and the third fall builds on the first two by Rusher smacking the fuck out of Jumbo en lieu of a clean break and Jumbo doing the same a few moments later. The cool thing is that they have built up this match to go many different paths: the knee of Rusher, Jumbo outsmarted by Rusher, Jumbo overpowers Rusher, Jumbo and rusher hate each other's motherfucking guts and they want to kill each other. Call me an old softy that loves Old School psychology but I'm so stoked that they chose the final choice and start beating the holy fuck out of each other. There is a total chaos that 70s Puroresu could attain if the brawl has enough heat and this motherfucker gets molten. Rusher is posted twice then Jumbo is posted and I'm looking for the blade that for some reason never appears. Jumbo drags Rusher into the ring and hits two Standing Side Suplexes for two. rusher hits a desperation Butterfly suplex for two. Jumbo gets the Boston Crab that Rusher powers out of to set up Rusher kicking off from the top rope when Jumbo is going for a German, thus crushing Jumbo's head and we get the DOUBLE PIN?! Schneider calls the double pin the least irritating of screwjobs. This was executed really well so this was the least irritating of the least irritating screwjobs because it was the end of a really great

wrestling match. I'm actually pretty partial to the Double Knockout ending so I'll think of it as such. I wanna see the rematch. This fucking rocked on a thousand levels. Rusher was God. Jumbo was God. Pre-dessicated Rusher had a vast array of innate coolness.

~!~

Ricky "The Dragon" Steamboat vs. "The Nature Boy" Ric Flair- (PHIL SCHNEIDER):

The NWA/WCW World title had more great matches contested over it, then any other title in America. Jack Briscoe, Lou Thez, Dory Funk Jr., Terry Funk, Harley Race, Ric Flair, Ricky Steamboat, Sting and Vader consistently delivered matches that would be the gold standard of the country. Ricky Steamboat and Ric Flair who had the greatest ring rivalry in U.S. history delivered the titles swan song in this match. Hogan was on his way in, and the match quality of the world title matches would soon plummet, and the great matches would be consigned to the undercard. I didn't see this match when it originally happened and I was sort of expecting to see both guys being slightly off, due to age and injury. However I think this match, compares favorably to their previous classics, and surprisingly they even broke out some mid-nineties moves, making this match pretty contemporary. Michael Buffer did probably his best announcing job, as he actually did a good job giving the match the feel of a heavyweight title fight. Heenan and Shivonie did a good job too, reffing their earlier matches, and really getting into the near falls. The beginning of the match had a bunch of amateur reversals, and Steamboat did his work the headlock spots, they also did the exchange of stiff chops and big backdrops. At about the fifteen minute mark they stepped it up, with Flair bodypressing both guys over the top rope, with both guys taking big bumps, Flair then goes for a piledriver on the floor, which Steamboat reverts into a backdrop. Steamboat whips Flair into the guardrail and attempts a big running splash and nukes his ribs on the rail. Flair then goes to the top rope and Steamboat catches him in a second rope superplex, Flair rolls to the floor and Steamboats climbs the middle of the ropes and hits a chop to the floor. Flair then gets back into the ring and tries his kneedrop with Steamboat catching it, and turning it into a figure four in a sweet spot,. That three minute segment was probably more hot move and workrate intensive then any comparable section of their previous matches. The end of the match was classic Steamboat v. Flair, with chop exchanges, bridging out of a pin into an backslide, inside cradles, flying bodypresses, fighting out of the figure four. The end comes as Steamboat goes for the double chicken wing and bridges back for the pin (which was the finish of their 2/3 falls Clash match from New Orleans), Flair lift his shoulder and since Steamboat's shoulder were down, Flair gets the win. Great match, just amazing considering the age of the workers. I think this match is very close to the best match of the 1990's in WCW (it is very close between this, Eddie v. Rey from Halloween Havoc, and the Bret v. Benoit tribute match) and it is often overlooked when you talk about the Steamboat v. Flair series. Get a hold of this if you haven't seen it, it will truly put a grin on the face of any old-schoolist.

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Abdullah the Butcher vs. Bruiser Brody with Fritz Von Erich as the referee- WORLD CLASS CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING- Steel Cage Match, Cotton Bowl- (REV RAY DUFFY):

WCCW not afraid to pull out the steel cages that people were taller than as Brody stands over the top of the cage. This is an outdoor show, everyone is wearing rain ponchos, probably prepared for the Gary Hart sweating exhibition from earlier in the show. This is quite wrestling clinic as Abby and Bruiser take it to the mat for 20 minutes for pin reversals... but seriously. This is a whole lot of punching and clubbing and kicking and the blading and the hurting and the hey hey stop it. Abby must have bladed himself about 4 times between Brody kicks. Brody blades after getting his head pushed up against the cage. Hart slips in a fork so we get some Abby Stabby action going on Brody. Fritz tries to take it from him and gets jabbed in the throat and more or less no sells it. Fritz fights and steals the fork from Abby and gives him a shot, setting up Brody getting the pin. Hey! I'm the booker! Fuck you, I ain't selling! This continues with Abby's post match attack as Fritz fights off Abby and Hart. Great way to get over your monster heel there, Fritz.

~!~

Jushin Liger/Koji Kanemoto vs. Ultimo Dragon/Masao Orihara- NEW JAPAN (12/19/1992)- (PHIL RIPPA): This match is the biscuits. Three great wrestlers and the young and spunky Orihara. To Liger and Kanemoto, Orihara has "Hey, he doesn't work here!" written all over him. For Orihara, that means a LONG night as Liger and Kanemoto take him to the woodshed. It is easy to see how this match breaks down. Dragon vs. Liger is a push as both guys are amazing and at this point in time they are both so good that it is a complete toss up as to who is the better wrestler. Dragon vs. Kanemoto leans the way of Dragon. Again, Kanemoto is a great wrestler but he wasn't at his peak yet so at this point in time he needs to wrestle above himself to get the advantage over Ultimo. Poor Orihara, still so young. Kanemoto and Liger smell blood in the water and Attack! Attack! Attack! Orihara also makes the mistake of trying to act all cocky and tough, so whenever he tries to shake off a nasty strike, Kanemoto and Orihara respond with three more strikes straight to Orihara's face. The balances of power always shifts to the WAR team when Dragon tags in and things pick up when Ultimo realizes "Hey, they're killing him out there. Guess I need to step it up a notch." So now there are four guys murdering each other and we get to watch. At one point in time, Orihara tweaks his knee and Kanemoto, the kind loving soul, says "Okay, kid we will take it easy on you." and then drops him right on his head. Orihara keeps managing to squirm out of trouble and tag in Ultimo. This is the first 10 minutes or so of the match and that is fucking great. Then the balls to the wall finishing sequence kicks in and things get even better. Liger kills Orihara twice on the floor including a deadly powerbomb. The New Japan boys get a couple of near falls that get the crowd all pumped up. Dragon manages to kick out of the Liger Bomb which becomes key. Orihara recovers and busies Liger as Dragon hits a release German suplex and a Big FUCK YOU Liger Bomb on Kanemoto to get the win. So the WAR team gets the upset win and some more history is added to the powderkeg that would be Dragon vs. Liger.

~!~

Katsumi Usuda vs. Ikuto Hidaka (Tournament Final for J-Cup Representative) 3/12/2000- BattlARTS- (DEAN RASMUSSEN):

Folks get excited about the Pro Wrestling. I know I do. You always wanna think that what you are watching is the coolest thing you can see, that you are seeing the cutting edge of the artform, that you have stumbled across a modern day classic or simply something to further reinforce one's wrestling fandom- so I usually take folks first impressions with a grain of salt- including my own (as I usually keep watch what I'm gonna review for the beloved Death Valley Driver Video Review for three additional weeks after the assigned comical deadline- all in an effort to get some distance from the initial freak-out at the coolness or repulsion from the horror. See! And you thought we... were... just lazy...deadbeats...). ANYWAY. I got reports from the usual supertrustworthy quarters that this match totally rocked ass and it was the best match of either of their careers. I was figuring it was ballooning hype leftover from the above average (but kinda flawed psychologically) TEIOH vs Usuda match. I was expecting Usuda vs Hidaka to be the same "Usuda Beats Diminishing Returns of Expectations" actual goodness as opposed to the ACTUAL Ass-Stomping Goodness of THIS match. This is the best match of either man's career and that is kinda saying something already. You'd think this match would be problematic because both of these guys don't fit the other's strength real well. Usuda is really good at beating the hell out of folks and looking all mat-worky in the classic Shootstyle Sense, while Hidaka is all about nouvelle Submissions-via-Lucha's-sweet-embrace and isn't gonna help you much in a basic BattlARTS stiffness Marathon. The story here is pretty straightforward- as Usuda plays old school UWF shootstyle defender, to the point of showing his Fujiwara training roots by not only whipping out the famed armbar but also doing the Stompy Headbutts that his teacher made famous. Hidaka, meanwhile, acts as if this is an Ode to Dos Caras as he not only hits his fucked-up Lucha-augmentation Submission Freakouts, but lifts a Dos Caras Run-Around- Armbar With Headscissors/ leg grapevine combination which makes me instantly party down with my bad self grooving to the youngster bringing the homage to the Tricked-Out Lucha Submission master. It is a weird, kinda minor match but the stylistic clash and then synthesis is the cool part. Usuda starts the body of the match by taking it to the mat, working for the kneebar, working for the cross-armbreaker, working for the key lock. Hidaka sells it straight up and the match starts spinning out of control slowly but surely as Hidaka hits the Springboard Dropkick to the knee and then hits the GNARLY full weight Springboard Senton. Usuda brings it back to earth by doing the Homage de Yamazaki by keylock countering a German- as if Hidaka were a less-butt-based version of the divine Koshinaka. Usuda later Yamazaki's a Hidaka Leg Lariat into a Heelhook and the freaky allusions fuel the story of the match as it goes from the air to the ground. Hidaka gets airborne and Usuda kicks him to stagnation and then has him crawling for the ropes to escape the submission. Suddenly, Hidaka realizes that Usuda can't counter without greater force so the Enzui-lariat becomes a Springboard Enzui-Lariat, the DDT becomes a Flying DDT, The Dragon Screw is off the top rope,- the damage has been done to Usuda so Hidaka whips out the diving kneebar rollup to take it back to the submission storyline. Usuda goes all Calgary Stampede with the faux Enzuiguri Double leg Inside Takedown. Usuda tries again and Hidaka counters into a Tiger Driver and Usuda Yamazakis it into a Cross-Armbreaker and then does this sweet Roll Into a Heelhook for the submission. This was a very cool match and it jammed a bunch of disparate elements together like good BattlARTS will do and they came together splendidly, which doesn't always happen when gambling with two workers as set in their styles as these two. Go get it, Sport!

The Royal Rumble Match 1992-January 19.1992- (PHIL RIPPA):

Shit - How the fuck am I going to review a fucking Royal Rumble. I am only doing this because I said I was going to review all the matches voted as the Best of the 90's. (I'll be getting to some major updates eventually so calm down. You know if you people sent me some fucking money, I might be motivated enough to get off my lazy ass and do some bigger and badder updates. I could also then subsidize the fucking eight million dollars that hispeed wants from us to move to a fucking dedicated server. Unlimited space my ass. Who knows, you might not even be reading this since our site could be pulled at any second thanks to the pricks at hispeed. Boy, I sure am swearing a lot. Oh well.)

Well, anyway, if you haven't figured it out yet, this is the match that Ric Flair made. The one where he went sixty minutes, won the WWF Heavyweight Title and carried 29 loads of shit to a bad/good/great match, depending on your point of view (and it isn't actually 29 guys but for the sake of hyperbole I am saying 29). On a side note - Flair must really love the Knickerbocker Arena (that would be in Albany, NY for the seven of you who care) because he has had two of his most famous matches in this arena - this match and the "I Quit" Match against Terry Funk. I think the easiest thing to do is to go through the wrestlers by order of entrance and make comments as I go along. You will see that there are two distinct parts of the match. But enough yammering by me - you want to know what warm bodies the WWF dragged out of month balls for their 55 second run in the Rumble.

PART ONE

- 1) British Bulldog - this is the gassed out, dreadlocked, hasn't crippled himself yet Bulldog. A decent enough choice to be number one. Bulldog and Flair will have a nice little wrestling match throughout the first 10 minutes as they keep eliminating other wrestlers to be the only participants.
- 2) Ted DiBiase - Part of the Money, Inc. team. I have to believe that some backstage politics or an injury was involved here as DiBiase is eliminated within a minute. Maybe, it was so DiBiase and Flair wouldn't be in the ring at the same time. I also note that they are skimming time off the clock as Davey Boy eliminated DiBiase about a minute in and suddenly - 10 seconds later - the next entrant was on his way down.
- 3) Ric Flair - best worker in the federation, let alone the match at the time. Had come in claiming to be the "real" world champion. Is about to do one of the greatest smoke and mirror jobs in the history of wrestling.
- 4) Jerry Sags - Ick! I think one of these days we need to determine, once and for all, who the suckier of the Nasty Boys was. Gets dumped quick to get it back to Bulldog v. Flair.
- 5) Haku - was kinda in limbo at this point. He had broken away from Heenan, but he was still a heel. Wasn't wearing the BICYCLE PANTS OF FEAR! but he didn't have a giant fro or anything.
- 6) Shawn Michaels - one of the few decent workers in this match. Michaels and his mullet bump like maniacs through the Rumble.
- 7) Tito Santana - the first of many wrestlecrap inductees who wrestle in this match as poor old Tito is firmly entrenched in his pink, Jennifer Beals loving legwarmers as EL MATADOR~! Tito though is a decent enough worker thus bringing the total in the ring to four. That would be the highest that total gets the rest of the way.

- 8) The Barbarian - this is during the period when he was wearing those furry trunks that would make Amy Acuff proud.
- 9) Kerry Von Erich - Kerry is of course doped up to high heaven when he enters the match. Throws a ton of discus punches; takes up space; shots himself - eventually, not in this match.
- 10) Repo Man - A wrestlecrap selection. The most surprising thing is that Darsow actually gets two eliminations (Valentine and Volkoff).
- 11) Greg Valentine - So not good at this point in time. Imagine my horror at the fact that Joe Malenko is expected to drag something watchable out of him in the year 2000.
- 12) Nikolai Volkoff - Nikolai was in full "I'm a converted Communist who loves America" mode. Still couldn't wrestle a lick. Gets dumped on his keister soon enough.
- 13) Big Bossman - Traylor was still worth a damn back in the day. This is the beginning of the end of Part One as Bossman's appearance means it is time to eliminate the deadweight. Everyone goes out in a hurry, including Hercules (keep reading). Bossman and Flair are left alone, Bossman dominates but accidentally eliminates himself. Flair celebrates by doing a Flair Flop.
- 14) Hercules - Hercules also had the most peculiar tan in the history of wrestling. What is even more disturbing is that Hercules looks exactly like a roided out Jake Roberts. Go back and look - it's a Rod Serling special.

PART TWO

- 15) Roddy Piper - Great camerawork as the look on Flair's face is priceless as Piper comes bounding out of the curtain. Piper won the IC belt earlier in the evening. Piper hates Flair. Piper attacks Flair. Heenan nearly has a coronary. Of course, it lots of punching, eye poking and no-selling from Piper, but what can you do? The crowd is eating it up. On an interesting note, Piper is the only person who wrestled earlier on the card and then worked the Rumble.
- 16) Jake Roberts - This was that big "trust me" era for Jake. That character was one of the first real "tweeners" in the federation. Anyway, they make the big deal out of him attacking everyone from behind (listen to the sequence where Heenan goes on and on about how much he loves Roberts and the second Jake hits Flair, Heenan rips him a new one). Blah, blah, blah. Big Jake managed to ruin this push right into a squash match against the Undertaker and then onto working random Indy shows when he could remember where he parked his car.
- 17) Jim Duggan - Not going to say anything nice so I am not going to say anything at all.
- 18) Irwin R. Schyster - another Wrestlecrap selection. Lasts WAY too long in this match.
- 19) Jimmy Snuka - Jimmy Christmas! You have Owen Hart standing in the back. He could have easily done another match but instead you drag Snuka's worthless ass out. Vince is MIGHTY loyal to those with the checkered past.
- 20) The Undertaker - Because of the "This Tuesday in Texas" mess (the whole reason the belts were held up in the first place), Taker and Hogan where each guaranteed to be in the last 20 entrants. Guess who got screwed? Even back then, the fans were in awe of the Undertaker. Back in the day, his big move was choking people. His big move now is... umm... does Taker have any moves anymore? (And please don't respond with a list of "Well, Phil he does the chokeslam and the Last Ride. Those are moves." It's a joke. Not a good one but a joke none the less.)

- 21) Randy Savage - Guess who hates Ric Flair? Savage, eliminates himself so the officials and the announcers have to quickly cover with some wacky rule explanation as to why Savage is allowed to stay in the match.
- 22) The Berzerker - another Wrestlecrap selection. Man alive, John Nord was horrible. He HUS!ed his way in, and HUS!ed his way right out.
- 23) Virgil - Virgil was his own man ya know. Those big candy stripper pants were really disturbing. Do any of you but Dean know what a candy stripper is? God, I'm old.
- 24) Colonel Mustafa - They give the good old Sheik a Bushwacker Luke level run in this thing as he is in for mere seconds. I guess it is fitting that he came marching out to ringside doing the whole Bushwacker arm thing too.
- 25) Rick Martel - Well, Martel is the last good worker that is going to enter this fray and he ain't going to escape the black hole of Hogan and Sid.
- 26) Hulk Hogan - Well, at least he didn't win.
- 27) Skinner - This is officially the superbowl of suck as Skinner is the last of the Wrestlecrap inductees to get his 90 seconds in the ring before Hogan puts himself over.
- 28) Sgt. Slaughter - Slaughter was still doing the whole pro-Iraq gimmick though the war was still over so- boy- him and Mustafa were in limbo. Slaughter, always the champ though, takes the HUGE shoulder bump over the turnbuckle to end his day.
- 29) Sid Justice - Sid and his perm get the Diesel push before there was a Diesel push as he destroys everyone. Sid clears the ring of everyone one and the crowd loves every second. The there is the infamous moment of when after Sid dumps Hogan, the crowd chanted for Sid not Hogan. Whoops! The WWF actually dumped over the cheers with boos because Hogan is a prick.
- 30) The Warlord - Mr. Irrelevant in this Rumble. Big old roid boy who no one knows what happened to him. Ask the Rick - he will tell you his IQ and then tell you that the Warlord was actually Paul Roma.

BAUXITE MEDIUM vs. Survival Tobita- Satima Pro-Wrestling Company- 4/29/00 -(DEAN RASMUSSEN):

BAUXITE a mystical historical fiction

I was talking to my old friend Bokujin Ken and it was the first time we had actually talked in years. I had come back to Japan after a long sabbatical in Singapore where I spent what was left of my pointless youth mired in riotous living, stinking of whiskey and whores. I came back to Japan two years later, knowing that I was now a man and had put away my childish ways. I had

forgotten about the stupid dreams that were seemingly unattainable to me and decided to play out the string as best I could. The best place to play out the string of my life is in Japan: it's where all my friends are and anyway, I've done all the exciting things here that there are to do so I have no temptation to go and find something exciting to do. Well, anyway, the thing about Ken was that he and I always stayed in touch and continuously hung out together, but when the deal went down with me and Jennifer and Bauxite, Ken never really picked sides. Bauxite and Jennifer liked it that way since I was the pathetic victim and all, but, still, I couldn't help but feel really betrayed. I know that's really fucked up and childish- but it was a genuine feeling and I can't control how I feel sometimes. I don't think it was an actual punishment towards Ken when I withheld my most intimate feelings from my oldest and best friend. It was just too devastating to know what he knew about Bauxite and Jennifer and I didn't want to know how well they were doing and just how much of a nonfactor I was in everybody in Japan's little lives. The thing about Singapore was that my fellow Japan Ex-Patriot- Octopus Eight- was already living there and was drinking his way out of some much heavier shit than what I running from, so I embraced his evil and became a large part of his life of drink and cocktail waitresses. Ken would come down and visit since he and O8 were old roommates in Nagasaki way back in the day, so there was never any true separation between me and Ken. Anyway, Ken and I were hanging out at this storage warehouse- since it was big enough and deserted enough for Ken not to freak too many people out, since he had developed this body of cardboard boxes and was continuously crying blood. I figured that since we had become so close recently, I'd go ahead and ask some questions about Jennifer. I had long since professed my love for Manhole Man v2 and gotten on with my life. Manhole Man makes me happy and it's a workable happy. Jennifer was a stupid youthful dream- a young beautiful girl that was actually no more made for me as she was for that pathetic fucker, Bauxite. I used to hate her but the older you get and the more malt liquor you drink, the more you put things into perspective. Bauxite was exciting and young and metallic and good-looking. I'm Survival Tobita and I didn't get that name by being a sex machine. I loved her but she could never get used to what a fucking freak I am. She was pissed when I didn't go to the New Japan dojo, she was pissed when I would show her my ideas of wrestling without rings. "I don't want to be with a man who can't provide for himself." I talked to Bauxite on the phone for a long time last weekend and he said that she said the same thing to him once. When I talked to Bauxite, I could tell that he was no longer alive. He was a lover and she was the beloved, as Carson McCuller would say. McCuller thought that love is never mutual that the lover lives off the beloved and the beloved starts to hate the lover since the beloved starts to become a host of this parasitic Lover. The thing with Jennifer is that she could be both. She was always the beloved in both Bauxite's and my relationship her- but instead of becoming BELOVED, THE VICTIM, she would become BELOVED, THE ONE WHO WOULD CREATE HER NEW BELOVED. She was ruthless in molding her lover into something that would be her Beloved- and it all makes perfect sense- in retrospect. In retrospect, you gotta respect a girl who will use sheer will to try to create what will make her happy, as opposed to simply being a pampered love thing. Now it all makes sense and is all noble and self-empowering and shit but at the time, it was psychological hell on earth. The problem with Bauxite is that he could never escape. He almost became Jennifer's idea of a perfect man. the problem was that he had completely destroyed whatever he had once had inside himself just to create this new thing for her to love. After Jennifer figured out that she was actually in love with

a walking shadow, she bolted on the poor motherfucker and Bauxite has been a fucking horror show ever since. Anyway, back to me and Ken at the Storage Warehouse. I asked him about Jennifer and if she had ever spoke of me while I was a truly pathetic broken motherfucker in Singapore. Jennifer and Ken were close friends for a while- especially after the break-up when Jennifer left me for Bauxite. We all divided up our friends and Jennifer was looking for quality friends to make up for my loyal contingent, so I figured enough time had passed and this would be the right time for Ken to turn on her and give me the story. I said, "Gilgil once told me that Jennifer said she missed talking to me since Bauxite isn't the smartest guy on earth. I mean what the fuck would you talk to Bauxite about?" Ken was noncommittal. "Well, Toby, to be honest, She never said anything to me." I think this was payback for the seven years I kept him in isolation. Or there is the possibility that I really didn't matter one iota to the social structure of my friends in Japan. I was standing on the mats. I heard Bauxites theme music. He was a hulking metallic figure and he was always into this crazy Teutonic Disco shit that would drive anyone crazy. I was gonna listen to my theme again and I was interrupted by a horrendously drunk Bauxite. He could barely move and he walked the circumference of the mats in this tilted halting gate. I looked at him and I pitied him for a moment. Only I would know how he was ground into powder and pissed on. Then I looked at myself and realized that I was also ground into fucking powder and I actually survived and moved on. I mean shit. He asked for this fate when he stole what was mine- and it was then when I no longer thought of him as the idiot savior who saved me from my own stupid romantic suicide. At that moment, I lost all respect. What a pussy. Here he is, coming to my gymnasium, calling me out in a drunken stupor. I grabbed a chair, drank a bud lite and threw it on the ground. I whispered, "Bauxite- that empty can is YOU." then I kicked his motherfucking ass for the glory of Japan.

~!~

Tomokai Honma vs. Kobayshi 10/31/97-BIG JAPAN - (PHIL SCHNEIDER):

These two are part of the Big Japan Death Match revolution, but this match was before Honma got the addicted to the sweet rush of metal slicing skin, and before Kobayashi became Abdullah Jr. . Kobayashi was still rocking his coffee break gimmick, although this match was sans comedy and was a darn good bit of wrestling. Honma breaks out his Minoru Tanaka aping with a bunch of tripped out kneebars and armbreakers, including a top rope sunset flip twisted into a kneebar. Kobayashi breaks out the suplexes, with a released German, fisherman suplex and bridged German. The end was pretty great as Kobayashi misses a fat man moonsault (Moe tastic) and Honma hits a missile dropkick and diving headbutt, on the arm, which he twisted into a keylock for the tap out. The superswank thing about that finish is that Honman did the headbutt into keylock finish in their big year 2000 ladder barbedwire death match except he hit it off of a ladder, you have to dig them doing the previous match homage to some meaningless 97 undercard match. The reason the Big Japan Death matches rule, is that all of the guys learned to work basic wrestling matches, before they even broke out the sweet hot death, thus their death matches are just good wrestling matches with the added bonus of hideous death bumps.

Adrian Adonis/ Harley Race/ Randy Savage vs. Ricky Steamboat/ Junkyard Dog/ Roddy Piper-WWF (Pre-Wrestlemania 3) Madison Square Garden main event- 6 man elimination tag- (REV RAY DUFFY):

This was built up as Roddy Piper's last MSG match as it was his first WWF retirement. At this point in time, they weren't playing theme music for any of the wrestlers. Slick and Gorilla Monsoon are on commentary. One thing I noticed is how loose the WWF ring ropes were during this time period. They do the tease for the WM3 match ups with each guy refuse to face the guy they are fighting at the PPV. Adonis is looking quite horrible at this time, borderline Potato with tooth picks stuck into it. JYD works against Race and hits his "Dog Butts" from all fours which Race comically oversells. Slick puts the badmouth on JYD through the whole match, calling him illiterate. The first falls start at about 8 minutes in when they're a 6 way brawl and the legal wrestlers, Adonis and JYD are counted out. Savage and Race beat up on Piper for a bit until he makes the hot tag to Steamboat. Steamboat dominates on Race with chops (amazingly, I don't think he did one armdrag in the match, that has to be some sort of record for Steamboat) until Savage reverse a small package throwing Race on top for a pin. Piper ends up getting the pin on Race after Savage accidentally hits Race with a double ax handle. Savage and Piper go back and forth mostly with brawling. The finish comes when they do a collision with Savage getting knocked out to the floor and Piper staying in the ring. Piper isn't so shaken up, but notices Savage on the floor and plays dead. Savage goes for the elbow, misses and Piper scores the pin. Nothing really spectacular, especially when you consider that Savage and Steamboat would go on to have one of my favorite matches of the 80's. Race showed some small flashes of goodness, but you've also got to consider he was probably in his mid to late 40's at least at that point in time.

~!~

Low-Ki vs Lightnin' Mike Quackenbush- 11/20/99- Future Wrestling Association- Palo Alto, Pennsylvania- (DEAN RASMUSSEN):

Low-Ki is the funnest thing out of Jersey and Quack is the Indie Light Heavyweight Messiah. Quack is slightly behind the curve of insane indie moves, but there is puritanical adherence to Puroresu that we here in DVDVRland have to adore and the aspect of this whole four hour Best Of Quack tape that this is pulled from, is that Quack is moving farther and farther from Indie Spotmachine and more into the realm of quasi-Puro wrestler- in that his matwork carries the body of the match and the stupider high spots or more contrived spots are falling to the wayside or becoming vestigial, which is great news for the young man. This match is a good example of this cursory fixation on Puroresu getting deeper- as this is more than just New Japan Junior Finishers and Lyger music. this is actually an accurate indie impersonation of a Great Sasuke vs Ultimo Dragon match- so it is really cool and freaky and weird with cool matwork building up to cool highspots and neat Japanese submissions that are filtered through cool Lucha submissions. The influence of Lucha on the Puroresu heroes of today is being filtered through to the Japanese influence on your US Indie light heavyweight heroes of tomorrow. The only weakness of the match is that the selling was as inconsistent as is the wont in US Indie/ US wrestling/ Junior Heavyweight wrestling which would be a valid trade off if all those BattlARTS tapes weren't right there for all to see how submissions are sold in state-of-the-art Juniors matches these days. Low-Ki, the really young highflying sensation who is progressing faster than anybody I've ever followed in the US (this guy is a frickin sponge), assumes the Sasuke role - though Low-Ki has a couple cooler submissions to make up for the fact that no one is more graceful than Sasuke unless you are twenty certain guys from Mexico. Either way, it starts

out fast as they hit the ropes and they do the cool ass spot where Sasuke does the Swandive rollthrough over his opponent tumbling underneath and it's not as smooth as Sasuke vs Ultimo would be, but what the fuck- they took the spot and did a cool homage to it so I'm in love. The thing about Low-Ki that I dig is that he is becoming quite the BattlARTS Junior American because he does the cool ass Roll-up into a WAR Special while tangling up Quack's legs on the way to whipping out the Submission To Die For. He precedes this move with a cool ass Lucha takedown into a Fujiwara Armbar. He follows the WAR Special variation with a Half-crab that he works into a sweet ass Step-Over Toe Hold Front Facelock with the Facelock inverted into ANOTHER WAR Special and it fucking RULED. The beef I have with this match is that when you add the swanky Spinning Shoulder Breaker that Low-Ki whips out in a solidified effort to establish the psychology of his matwork being an extended foray in destroying Quack's back and shoulder (with the announcer getting this point over pretty effectively, I'll add) Quack doesn't actually work this back into the match as they hit the New Japan Junior's finishing sequence. The fact that New Japan Juniors would also disregard the matwork so completely I will take deeply into account but it would have made for deeper psychology for the match and would have taken a cool ass homage to higher place. The ending is pretty balls out if you disregard the idiotic run-in by Jardi Franz et al. Low-Ki takes a Kanemoto Reverse Top rope Hurricanrana just like El Samurai took it in 1997- right on top of the head. The Quackendriver is renamed the Quackensmash and ref distraction allows for the final New Japan Junior homage as Quack quotes Lyger vs Benoit 1993 and hits the Cool As Fuck Top rope Lyger Driver. If the rematch has Low-Ki hitting a Top rope Gutwrench Powerbomb, the circle will be complete. The criticism I have for this match is out of love for this match and the idea behind it. They will soon get this style match past the referential stage and instill the selling to make it a deeper match. The progress of Quack in the last year is all pointing straight to that level. Either way, I wish all US Indie matches were this ambitious so that it could actually be put in the Puroresu spectrum of Junior matches as opposed to the lower US Indie Spotfest spectrum. Quack and Low-Ki bring hope to the domestic Juniors scene and I'm glad.

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Puck Dupp vs. Jesse Taylor - NCW Wildside (Early 2000)- (PHIL RIPPA):

I had a couple of episodes NCW Wildside lying around from the beginning of the year that I never watched so this is as good of a reason to skim through them. Poor Marty is wrestling is the rather forgettable Dupp gimmick and this was after the other two had signed with the WWF. So the man formerly and currently known as Cham Pain was in gimmick limbo. Anyway, Taylor is quite the Nise Smokey Mountain Brian Lee as he is a big stiff with huge mullet. Dupp bumps like a madman to make the match watchable. He even busts out the corkscrew plancha. Nothing else of note as there is only so much that Taylor can do. Dupp goes over with a reverse DDT. Standard Indy fare.

~!~

Ice vs. Wolverine- OMEGA- Probably sometime in 1997 - (PHIL SCHNEIDER):

This match is from the early days of the late lamented OMEGA promotion. Wolverine is the neon green bedecked, facepainted Jeff Hardy, while Ice is the more highspotty of the two. Suprisingly not a lot of matwork, as both guys break out the spots. Ice who was greener then Leprechaun semen doesn't actually blow anything and hits some big spots, including a splitlegged moonsault, springboard rana, and springboard tornillo (this was when Ricky Marvin was still in Junior High, as opposed to being a Sophomore like he is now). Wolverine (which is sartorially the least of Jeff's 183 OMEGA gimmicks) hits an asai moonsault and a shooting star press, and proves he was just as willing to die in front of 83 people at a fair, stopping by to watch on there way to look at North Carolina's biggest sow, as he is for actually money on PPV, by climbing onto a wall about 18-20 feet above the ring and splashing the young Ice for the pin. Not really a mat classic or anything, but it had the crisp new millennium high flying OMEGA delivered in spades.

~!~

Lex Luger/Ric Flair vs. Jimmy and Ronnie Garvin- NWA Saturday Night- (REV RAY DUFFY): Ah, the old TBS Studio. Billed as a "Dream Match" by the graphics. Tony Shavonie and Davey, Davey Crockett are on commentary. Garvin and Flair start out and work each other over with chops. Referee Scrappy McGowan makes up for Ronnie's short hair to make sure we have our 80's set of 4 mullets in the match. The segments with Flair and Ronnie were pretty good. Ronnie gets a lot of flack for the Garvin Stomp, but he was a stiff brawler and a competent mat guy from what I remember and probably doesn't deserve as much abuse as he gets. I mean, Vince Russo and company have done wonders to erase the fact at one point Ronnie was considered one of the weakest NWA Champions of all time. Ronnie's chops actually cut open Flair's chest during one of the exchanges. When we come back from a commercial break, we get the dreaded rope assisted armbar from Luger on Ronnie. Luger blows a leap frog on Jimmy. JJ tries to run off with Precious and ends up getting beat up by Dusty and Nikita. The Horsemen get DQed when they throw out the referee. The Garvins make a comeback with Ronnie KO'ing Luger with a punch and Jimmy "pinning" Flair with a brainbuster after the finish. This was your typical build up match to the Great American Bash to build up potential matches with the Garvins against Flair and Luger in singles.

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Superstar Bill Dundee vs. Sweet Brown Sugar - 1982?- (PHIL SCHNEIDER):

This was the culmination of a feud between the Jimmy Hart helmed incubatory Koko B. Ware and the lost super worker of the 1980's Bill Dundee, this brutal war could only be settled one way, 2 out of 3 falls Scaffold match. Basically they start on the scaffold and after they get knocked off they have to climb back on. The Scaffold was probably legit 25 feet up, although the danger was more accidental, if they fell they would probably cripple themselves, because when you do a hanging drop which is how all three falls ended, your feet are only 4 feet or so above the height of the top rope. These matches can never be good, because of the limits of what one can do on a thin ladder hung 25 feet in the air, but because so much of the Memphis style is based on punching and kicking anyway this was better then most. The blows were really stiff,

and the work was logical, i.e. the moves each person did made sense in the context of a scaffold. Dundee and Sugar were both great workers and I imagine that I would have enjoyed a standard match between the two a lot more, but this did have a bizarre spectacle aspect to it, that I dug.

~!~

Macho Man Randy Savage vs. Hercules Ayala- WORLD WRESTLING COUNCIL- (REV RAY DUFFY):

This is for Savage's North American Heavyweight Championship. This is an English language commentary as it must be a "mat classic" type deal as Savage was in the WWF at the time this must have aired, around 1988. Ayala throws Savage around with press slams and stuff with Savage bumping around for him. This is quite stinky early on as Ayala dominates with punches and stuff. Savage chains Ayala once for a near all. Savage misses an elbow and hits another chain shot for another near fall. Ayala pulls the chain out of Savage's tights and nails him with the chain for the finish. Hey, you ain't missing this match.

~!~

Black Harts v. Samurai Warriros (Sumo Hara/Benke Sasaki)- Stampede Wrestling- 1989(?)- (REV RAY DUFFY):

Joined in progress. I'm pretty sure Sumo Hara is Junji Hirata with a mullet. We start off with the yellow cards for rules violations by the Blackharts. What's really surprising is that Hara does a moonsault body press that misses a Blackhart and hits Sasaki. Yurgen Herman, the referee issues a second yellow card for choking by the Blackhart. Sasaki I'm pretty sure is Kensuke Sasaki. This is pretty back and forth, but the Blackharts catch Sasaki with a veg-o-matic for the win. Sort of clipped, but enjoyable.

~!~

Steven Wright vs. Fit Finlay- Catch Wrestling Association-1990- (REV RAY DUFFY):

If I'm not mistaken, Steven is Alex Wright's father. Finlay is the heel in this, as he complains following a forearm uppercut that Wright used his fist. Wright is pretty agile and has some great ridiculous 80's style tights. the first round is pretty much right's round, he throws out some neat takedowns and stuff. This seems like your typical loud mouth rudo gets schooled a bit by the skilled tecnico early on with Wright controlling until fit takes over with some good ol' fashion brawling and elbows to the face. Second Round is Finlay's with his brawling giving him the edge. The great thing about this is between rounds they show the previous highlights in slow motion complete with sound slowed down as well. Round 3 opens with Fit busting out the Jumbo jumping knees to put down Wright twice. Wright catches him once and they tease a throw over the top rope by Wright, but the ref stops it. But Fit charges and gets back dropped out anyways. Wright catches Fit in a small package, but it's too close to the ropes to draw a count. Wright loses his cool in this round and gets quite a few warnings from the referee for stomping and hitting Fit when he's in the ropes. Round 4 is a little more evenly matched. Fit controls early by sucker punching Wright during a ref's warning and hits a few back breakers on Wright before Wright counters with one of his own. Steven catches fit in an airplane spin for a

two count with Wright keeps trying to hold down for the pin. The round ends with Fit attacking after the bell and getting issued a card by the referee. Round 5 opens with Fit charging in and a slug fest. Fit puts down Alex and picks him up and hits him with a few jumping knees off the ropes. Steven rolls through a cross body for a near fall. Fit goes for the tombstone but has it reversed on him as Wright hits it for the win. For my first catch match, it was pretty good. The replays made it though.

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Jumbo Tsuruta/Yoshiaki Yatsu vs. British Bulldogs - 5/24/89- ALL JAPAN- (PHIL SCHNEIDER): You have to get hyped for any match that has both Jumbo Tsuruta and Dynamite Kid, two of the three best workers of the 1980's, rocking it in the same ring together. However I also found myself digging Yatsu who I hadn't seen a ton of before. Yatsu who is about to get the holy hell kicked out of him in PRIDE (Yats baby- don't ever bet the spread against the Tokyo Giants) was quite the strong style asskicker, at one point he had Davey Boy Smith in the corner and just wasted him with a half a dozen brutal uppercuts, he also had nice snap on his suplexes and had a nice Amateur series to start with Davey Boy. Davey Boy Smith (Don't do drugs kids) looked pretty good too, including press slamming Yatsu and standing vertical suplexing Tsuruta, both of whom are big men, Davey did work sort of loose though, which was a big contrast to the complete lack of daylight being shown by everyone else. Jumbo and Dynamite stole the show though, Tsuruta showed what a king he was, by really selling well for the much smaller Dynamite (who was about 70 pounds lighter then his gas monster peak. Really, kids. Don't do Drugs) but still keeping himself credible. Even in his broken down state, Dynamite still did everything with such force and snap and was just compelling to watch. The match story had the Dogs tagging in and out, and working over Jumbo's arm (which included Jumbo taking the Psychosis ringpost bump) the ending was very 1980's WWF (Dogs must have used it with Bravo and Valentine a million times) Dynamite is on the apron and Jumbo reverses Davey Boy right into him and they smash heads (with Dynamite flying to the ground, just stick Jimmy Hart into Dynamites roll and you have the finish to ever single match I watched on Prime Time Wrestling as a pre-teen) and Jumbo gets the roll up for the pin. I don't think I need to tell you to get this, these AJ Classics are freaking gold.

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Maasaki Mochizuki/ SASUKE/ Sasuke The Great/ Shiima Nobunaga/ Judo Suwa/ Sumo Fuji vs. Super Delfin/ Masato Yakashiji/ Gran Hamada/ Norio Hoshikawa/ Yone Genjin-(Phil Schneider): This was in the middle portion of Michinoku Pro, Kaientai DX had left for the land of Vince Russo castration angles and jobbing in wacky comedy matches to Giant Silva; Delfin and the Osaka boys were still around, still broke and still dogging it, and they had yet to start importing every international crazy highflyer. Great Sasuke was coming off one of his multiple surgeries, and has turned heel donning an awesome mask (GOOD!!) and a ode to Tiger Jeet Singh fencing foil (BAAAD!) and has teamed up with CRAZY MAX and formed Sasukes bunch of bastards. The first portion of this match wasn't that great, as it had CRAZY MAX doing all of those wacky triple teams which were kind of stupid and they pretty much eliminated as there matches got better, plus lots of Sasuke the Great and Yakashiji taking it to the mat, and

SASUKE making Hamada bleed by jabbing him in the head. It picked up nicely in the end as they did a cool dive sequence with Suwa winning that contest with a ass stomping old school tope, and SASUKE proves his insanity (as if this wasn't conclusively proved years earlier) by doing a broken knee Quebrada. The end is really great as whimsical comedy figure Yone Genjin says "fuck the jokes" and hits a great dragon screw on double MM. This pisses off Maasaki and he brings it, just kicking the holy fuck out Yone, as the kicks to his face make him cry the tears of a clown. If this got the New Japan treatment it would be all that, but the death of Yone overtakes the early suck.

~!~

Toad vs. Rukkus - NCW Wildside "Y2Kaos"- (PHIL RIPPA):

Mr. Rukkus sure looks like he has never meet a syringe he didn't like. Sweet, sweet Gas. Toad isn't afraid to work down to his opponent's level so this wasn't very good. Rukkus knows a couple of different suplex variations and he does a flying headbutt to the floor, which was neat. The problem is that he doesn't know much in the way of wrestling. I guess they just went straight to the "Now toss the guy straight over your head" at whatever school Rukkus trained at. Toad relies on his bad punches and the chin lock BABY~! to get through this affair. I've seen a lot worse but my dear friend, Mr. Fast Forward, was leaned on heavily.

~!~

Jumbo Tsuruta vs. Harley Race - 6/11/77 (NWA Title)- (DEAN RASMUSSEN):

I keep watching this match over and over. I love 70s hard style of wrestling but it is a real shock to the system when you've watched lots and lots of modern style wrestling. The pace is different, the stories are different, the moves are simpler and more to the point. Harley Race has the Mutton chops, the military tattoos and the Ode to The Pittsburgh Steelers jacket that says I AM THE SEVENTIES. I have a lot of fond memories of Harley Race and most are documented in the beloved Death valley Driver Video Reviews of yore. The thing that THIS match hipped me to was that the reason why Harley Race and Jack Brisco and Terry Funk were such awe-inspiring figures when I was a kid and the reason was because they only came around once or twice a year. So while local hero Wahoo McDaniel was wasting time having endless feuds with Brute Bernard in Fishersville, VA, Harley Race was using his spare time to have immensely awe inspiring motherfucking great matches against Jumbo Tsuruta. This fact was apparent even when I was an eleven year old rube in Arkansas. He'd come in and wrestle and it would be a wrestling match- no faces, no heels, just your best guy in your territory trying to hang with the NWA heavyweight champion. The cool thing about Japan is that- as a territory- their best guy to have a go at the NWA champ is motherfucking Jumbo Tsuruta, so it's almost as cool as having Dick Murdoch as your ace to take on the champ. Either way, the first fall is a wacky 70s spotfest- as the two big bastards start off with huge power moves and body slams and Deep Armdrags to get the crowd worked up early. Race brings them back to earth and settles them down by finally getting on with the match after cursory armbars that made up Jumbo's initial foray into some kind of story. Race slows down the arm dragtastic Jumbo with a crushing Shoulder Breaker. The story of the first fall is very All Japan and Harley Race brings it to the table. Jumbo's big move is the Butterfly Suplex and Harley drops to a knee to block it.

Jumbo is gassed from the twenty bodyslams traded in the first five minutes to deadlift him into a Butterfly. Race makes it to the ropes, throws a shoulderblock out of the tie-up, hits a FRESH Snapmare and he follows it up with a fucking KneeDrop that is to kneedrops what Stan Hansen's Elbow Drop is to elbow drops and then he gets a front facelock and we gear up for the start of the end of the fall. Jumbo still can't even think straight after Race mauled his skull with that Kneedrop, but makes it up to a vertical base, powers out of the headlock and hits GIGANTIC High Knees to finally hit the Butterfly for the first fall. Race is pissed and he wants a breather so he Lawlers until he can get the advantage at the lock-up and THE SECOND STORY BEGINS: Race hits another Shoulderbreaker, a Memphis non-Jumping pile-driver and a side suplex, but Jumbo is Giant Young and Strong and he survives. Race does TWO Motherfuckers of kneedrops to set up another front facelock and we gear up for the elaborate finish that the pressure hold signals. Race with a Kneelift, two Murdockian Straight Lefts and then hits ANOTHER Motherfucker of a Kneedrop. Race circles and hovers a second, looking like your Redneck Asshole Uncle who drinks Shaeffer, rides a Harley and calls you a pussy for working in an office. He then hits three diving headbutts and Jumbo's head is crushed and mangled. Jumbo does have enough left to reverse out of another facelock and goes for the cradling pin, but Race fights out. Jumbo does an elaborate Hammerlock display that is fabulous in it's grandeur and variation. It goes all Memphis as Race gets the transition through punches to the face as Jumbo reverses a corner whip but does the Psychosis Corner Bump in 19 fuckng 77 to allow Race to hit the Final Skull-crusher in the way of a Brainbuster, thus making the submission to the Indian Deathlock just a technicality. The Deathlock is a true thing of beauty though- as Race does the cool thing that makes 70s wrestling so cool- he pauses and falls down slowly with his dead weight falling, as opposed flailing back wildly. you sense the weight and it adds to the effect of the point of impact when Race hits the mat, driving jumbo's shin through his knee-joint. Race is poetic and graceful in the most brutal way a man can be. And Jumbo can take no more. The clarity of the this second fall is fucking GREAT. Race hits a variation of moves that turn Jumbo's Brain Stem to jello all to set up his big finisher- and the finisher leads up to the..... STORY OF THE THIRD FALL! The first two falls were instrumental in showing how the finishers worked and were set-up. The third fall is neutral as they start from scratch and mix it all together in the rush to the finish. Harley Race counters out of a headlock at the very beginning of the third fall by hitting a Shinbreaker and goes straight to work on the Indian Deathlkocked knee: first with Elbow drops on the joint and then with a kneebar. Jumbo counters by kicking Harley right in the face. Jumbo hits the Side Suplex and sets up the Jumbo Dropkick. Race slaps the second dropkick away and sinks in the front Facelock. Jumbo reverses out of it with a fat fat Vertical Suplex that Jumbo works into an Abdominal Stretch. the crowd gets hyped until Harley shifts his weight and throws him to the ground. Like a whimsical child, Race puts his arms out like he is pretending to be an airplane and the plane called Harley Race crushes face first into the skull of Jumbo Tsuruta. Harley goes to that special land where he and Ric Flair do mythical gymnastics off the top rope- a Flying Body Press, a cutting edge Top rope Elbow Drop, even a Superfly Splash. It all goes for naught as Jumbo ruins his dream and launches him to the mat with a 70s style thud. Jumbo also has a dream. He says that he can use his size and agility to splash race and win the NWA title. Race is also a destroyer of dreams and gets his knees up to drain the air out of Jumbo and crush his dream for championships for now. Race dives on Jumbo and they do the double bump over the top rope

to the floor. As they get back, Jumbo has one last shot left and he goes for the desperation High Knee that Race avoids, sending Jumbo sprawling into the ropes. Harley seizes this final advantage and rolls up young Tsuruta for the pin. The NWA belt never looked better on anyone else.

[illegible]

NEXT WEEK: GAEA! NOAH! ARSION! SPWF! REVOLUTION PRO! STUFF!

THE DEATH VALLEY PLAYBOYS.

seven fists in the face of wrestling

^^*^*^*^*^*^*^*^

You say you don't love me

Well that's alright with me 'cos I'm in love with you

And I wouldn't want you doing things you don't want to do

Oh you know I've always wanted you to be in love with me

And it took so long to realize the way things have to be

I wanted to live in a dream that couldn't be real

And I'm starting to understand now the way that you feel

You say you don't

You say you don't

You say you don't love me

-The Buzzcocks